

# El Gigante will slam bodies, not dunks

Tomorrow night, the wrestling world will get its first chance to see the next Andre the Giant. Or maybe the Raja Lion or Silo Sam.

El Gigante, believed to be the tallest man to step foot in a pro wrestling ring, will make his debut as part of the 11-match National Wrestling Alliance "Coastal Crush" television special on TBS.

Gigante, 26, whose real name is Jorge Gonzales, is 7-foot-6½ and 435 pounds. He is a former member of the Argentine national basketball team and was a third-round draft choice of the Atlanta Hawks a few years back. He was deemed too slow for the NBA, but when NWA television announcer Jim Ross first heard about Gonzales two years ago, he saw him as a 1990s version of Andre the Giant.

World Wrestling Federation officials also were interested in training Gonzales to wrestle, but the NWA had the inside track in negotiations since the Hawks and the NWA both are owned by Ted Turner. Jim Herd, who runs the NWA for Turner, put the deal together to bring Gonzales into wrestling and then sent him to Florida to be taught by former wrestler Hiro Matsuda.

NWA officials claim to have spent \$300,000 in signing Gigante and getting him ready to wrestle. His debut was scheduled for a pay-per-view show in late February, but training was interrupted by Gigante's bout with sugar diabetes. NWA fans got their first look at him when he appeared at ringside after the Ric Flair-Lex Luger main event on the "Capital Combat" pay-per-view show on May 19.

Gigante stands nine inches taller than Andre, although he has more natural physical proportions. Andre, 44, retired seven weeks ago after a 23-year career, although don't rule out a comeback down the road. He was one of pro wrestling's alltime biggest gate attractions. From the mid-1970s through the early 1980s, he was the game's highest-paid performer. Billed at 7-foot-5, although in reality he was 6-9, Andre first arrived on the U.S. scene in 1983 as a 385-pound powerhouse. In later years, his weight ballooned past the 500-pound mark due partially to health problems related to a glandular disorder.

However, size alone doesn't guarantee success. A few years back, a guy named Silo Sam, who was 7-2 and more than 400 pounds and once appeared in a Pee Wee Herman movie, burst upon the scene as a taller-than-

Andre attraction. But he had no athletic ability whatsoever, and his career lasted just a few months and never got past the smaller circuits. Even shorter-lived was the career of Raja Lion, a 7-4 Pakistani whose career lasted one match.

Gigante is scheduled for a few more June matches against the Cuban Assassin to give him some experience before his first real ring test on the NWA's July 7 pay-per-view show from Baltimore. In that match, Gigante is tentatively scheduled to team with Paul Orndorff and the Junkyard Dog against Arn Anderson, Barry Windham and Sid Vicious.



**GRUNT AND GRIN**

BY DAVE MELTZER  
FOR THE NATIONAL

**ETC:** Hulk Hogan is negotiating a two-picture deal with New Line Cinema. Hogan won't play a wrestling character in either movie. If

the deal goes through, Hogan would be available for fewer WWF dates in 1991. ... Officials of the Japanese promotion Super World Sports reportedly are offering Hogan and the WWF more than \$200,000 for Hogan to wrestle Japan's top heavyweight, Genichiro Tenryu, on Oct. 20 in Yokohama. It probably would be the largest single-match payoff in wrestling history.

## COASTAL CRUSH LINEUP

Lineup for the National Wrestling Alliance TBS television special Wednesday from McAllister Fieldhouse at The Citadel University in Charleston, SC:

1. "Flyin" Brian Pillman vs. Mean Mark (managed by Paul E. Dangerously)
2. The Samoan Swat Team (Fatu and The Savage) vs. Captain Mike Rotunda and Tom "Z-Man" Zenk
3. Tommy "Wildfire" Rich vs. Bam Bam Bigelow
4. The Fabulous Freebirds (Michael P.S. Hayes and Jimmy "Jam" Garvin) vs. The Southern Boys (Tracy Smothers and Steve Armstrong)
5. ~~El Gigante~~ Cuban Assassin
6. Doug Fumas vs. Barry Windham
7. United States tag-team title match: Jim Cornette's Midnight Express ("Beautiful" Bobby Eaton and "Sweet" Stan Lane) vs. The Rock & Roll Express (Ricky Morton and Robert Gibson)
8. Paul "Mr. Wonderful" Orndorff vs. Arn Anderson
9. NWA tag-team title match: Doom ("Hacksaw" Butch Reed and Ron Simmons, managed by Theodore R. Long) vs. Rick and Scott Steiner
10. United States title match: Lex Luger vs. Sid Vicious
11. NWA title match: "Nature Boy" Ric Flair vs. The Junkyard Dog

Chad-

6/12/90

- DQ, watch it break hold

→ DQ  
→ Mr. Wonderful title match

100

Gigante's debut wasn't shown

Horsmen attack  
JYO, gang up, "boulder"  
come out... Sting will probably  
win NWA title on July 7.